DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 270 813 CS 209 915

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TITLE Is Newspaper Reading Related to Where People Shop? An Analysis within Structurally Different Communities.
PUB DATE Aug 86
NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (69th, Norman, OK, August 3-6, 1986).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Advertising; Comparative Analysis; *Habit Formation; Influences; Journalism; *Media Research; Merchandising; *Newspapers; Reader Response
IDENTIFIERS Advertisements; Advertising Effectiveness; *Shopping

ABSTRACT

A study analyzed the relationship between reading in various community structures and where people shop for goods and services, and whether this relationship differs by the type of community in which individuals reside. Telephone interviews were conducted with samples of 100 or more subjects in each of 10 Minnesota communities, including a small town, a regional center, two large metropolitan cities, and six suburbs. Subjects were asked to respond to questions regarding education, occupation, age, and length of residence in the community, as well as questions about reading of newspapers and shopping habits. Results, indicating differences among communities in the extent to which people say they obtain services locally, lead to three generalizations: (1) there is a concentration of services in growing regional cities; (2) the suburbs are largely residential in nature, with citizens going to a wide range of communities for shopping and professional services; and (3) people in small towns buy groceries locally but do their nonfood shopping elsewhere. Newspaper reading appears to be more strongly tied to choice of place for services in an outlying rural community than in regional or metropolitan communities. (DF)

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An analysis within structurally different communities

P. J. Tichenor, G. A. Donohue, and C. N. Olien

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CS 209915

Paper presented to the Newspaper Division of the Association For Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Norman, Oklahoma, August, 1986

IS NEWSPAPER READING RELATED TO WHERE PEOPLE SHOP?

An Analysis Within Structurally Different Communities

P. J. Tichenor, G. A. Donohue and C. N. Olien

The newspaper is a continuing link between citizens and community services. A major role of the press is thought to be that of keeping citizens in touch with where to shop, what to do evenings and weekends and where to find such services as auto repair. This conclusion is supported by several studies that indicate that newspaper advertisements are rated by community residents as more useful (1) or more credible (2) than other media, and that advertising in newspapers is highly valued in its own right as a type of content (3, 4).

This is an analysis of how newspaper reading in varying community structures is related to where people shop for goods and services--such as food, nonfood items, recreation, health needs and repair work. The central question is whether the relationship between reading and shopping patterns differs by type of community in which individuals reside.

One of the long-standing principles of newspaper circulation, documented by Galpin more than a half-century ago, is that it tends to fit the geographic boundaries of the community's retail area (5). If the population finds all of its services within a single trade area, one would expect joint use of the local newspaper and local shopping and service outlets to be high. As regional trade centers have developed and small town services have declined, however, patterns of shopping and trade become more variable. Bogart and Orenstein found a strong

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relationship between shopping in a particular urban community and reading its daily newspaper (6, 7).

While the Bogart and Orenstein study was in a highly urbanized "intercity" area, one might expect the relationship between choice of newspaper and choice of community for these services to be even stronger in a more homogeneous outlying community where the newspaper is typically a weekly. Services in such a community tend to be concentrated within the corporate limits of the municipality, and it is these service businesses and agencies that form the main advertising content of the paper. These services are often extremely restricted in scope, particularly in clothing, electronic and related consumer items, and professional services such as medicine and health. Many small communities have seen a continuing decline in service availability which, along with improved highways and development of regional shopping centers, has meant that an increasing portion of shopping is done at a distance from the home town.

Where the primary retail and service centers in communities are mostly in town, as they are in the small rural community, the link between reading and use of services would presumably be clear and direct. Newspapers in such places will concentrate on reporting about and advertising the downtown businesses and service opportunities in that center, thereby reinforcing citizen dependence upon and use of those opportunities.

The situation in a metropolitan area is quite different, in that the large metropolitan newspapers carry advertising for stores and services in a variety of municipalities. Products advertised by chain-owned department stores can be purchased in any one or more of a number of shopping centers or malls scattered around a metro area. As

businesses have tended to expand or relocate to suburbs, the advertising orientation of the big city daily has expanded accordingly. Therefore, one might expect a lesser relationship between reading a newspaper and choice of a community for services in the metro area than in an outlying community where services are both restricted and concentrated.

Survey procedures

In 1978 a sample of 100 or more persons was interviewed by telephone in each of 10 Minnesota communities. These included Paynesville, a small rural community; St. Cloud, a regional center; the twin cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul and six suburbs (8). The local newspapers are published weekly in Paynesville and the suburbs and daily in the twin cities and St. Cloud. Paynesville is located in the same county as St. Cloud and is within the larger trade area which St. Cloud dominates. Respondent measures included reading of local newspapers and which community they "usually go to" for food and groceries, other shopping, recreation, and such services as repairs and medical care. Other background measures included education, occupation, age and length of residence in the community. The study also included a separate scale of "closeness" to the local community, utilized as an indicator of social psychological identification with the community.

Where people go for services

Survey results indicate sharp differences among communities in the extent to which people say they obtain services locally. The results in Table 1 are for those who say they "usually go" to their own community alone, to their own community and outside, and outside only. As the results indicate, only 10 percent of the suburbanites "usually go" to their own communities alone for nonfood shopping and only a fourth or slightly more obtain their recreation or medical and repair services in

Table 1. Percent of citizens going only to their own community for four services.

Percent	Paynes-ville (n:120)	St. Cloud (n:100)	Mpls/ St. Paul (n:277)	Six Suburbs (n:659)
Food, Groceries				
Locally only	68 %	88 %	74 %	56 %
Local + outside	14	6	5	5
Outside only	18	6	20	39
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %
Nonfood shopping				
Locally only	22	77	43	10
Local + outside	20	3	9	5
Outside only	57	20	45	83
Other	1	0	3	1
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %
Recreation				
Locally only	53	71	47	24
Local + outside	17	11	8	7
Outside only	23	14	32	59
Other ***	7	4	13	10
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %
Repair, medical				
Locally only	55	82	78	28
Local + outside	26	4	3	9
Outside only	19	14	17	62
Other	0	0	2	1
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

*** The "other" responses for recreation included, primarily, individuals who said they went outside the metropolitan area for that activity.

their home suburbs alone. Only for food and groceries do more than half of suburbanites go only to the local community, reflecting the dispersion of retail grocery outlets in small plazas as well as larger shopping centers around the metro area.

The highest proportions saying they usually obtain these services in the local community are in St. Cloud, where at least 71 percent go locally alone for each kind of service. The twin cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul are second for all except recreation in proportion

obtaining the services entirely in the home community. In food and grocery buying and in obtaining repair and medical services, the core cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul and St. Cloud are much alike in dominating the choices of residents.

These findings underscore:

(1) the concentration of services in a growing regional city such as St. Cloud, as well as in the metropolitan core cities;

(2) the residential nature of suburbs, in which citizens reside but go to a wide range of communities for shopping and professional services; and

(3) a pattern of service use in a small town which bears some similarity to the suburban pattern, in that residents buy groceries locally but do their nonfood shopping somewhere else.

The almost total domination of service use in St. Cloud reflects the particular stage of development of that regional city and the intense concentration of services either within or immediately adjacent to its municipal boundaries. While Minneapolis and St. Paul comprise the center of a diverse metropolitan area, St. Cloud is a growth center surrounded by rural communities and at this stage has a greater concentration of services within its corporate limits than it might have after further development. This is not at all unusual for regional centers at this stage in their growth, contrasting sharply with the pattern found in core cities such as Minneapolis and St. Paul which are now surrounded by widely dispersed but easily reached services.

The dispersion of services in the Twin Cities differs substantially from the rural pattern as well as that in the regional city. In Paynesville, for example, the relative absence of a wide range of

nonfood retail items locally would lead residents to get those items elsewhere, particularly in St. Cloud. In the suburbs there is easy access not only to the core cities but to other suburbs as well. Suburban Roseville adjacent to St. Paul is home to Rosedale, a large shopping mall. While that center may be a source of considerable civic pride and economic growth, it does not necessarily tie Roseville residents to its shops and stores. With little extra time and effort, someone living within two or three miles of Rosedale can drive to any one of several large discount and department stores dispersed around the suburban ring and in the core cities. The same would be true for Cincinnati, St. Louis, Seattle, Atlanta, Phoenix, Denver, or most other large metro complexes.

While both suburbanites and Paynesville area residents obtain a substantial share of their nonfood shopping items outside their home communities, there are noticeable differences for other services. Slightly more than two-thirds in the Paynesville sample reported getting their groceries in that town, while only 22 percent said they usually do "other shopping" locally. For these two categories, Paynesville is only slightly above the suburbs. However, in proportion choosing the local community for recreation and for medical and repair services, Paynesville is much higher than in suburbs, where these opportunities are within reach at a number of metropolitan locations.

Since the Paynesville sample included outlying rural townships, a check was made of respondents who resided within Paynesville or adjacent townships. While this group showed a greater tendency to get repair and medical services locally, they differed very little from the overall sample in percentage using other local services.

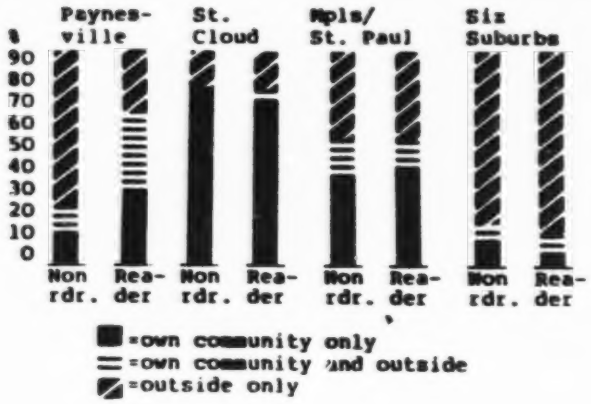
Newspaper reading and service use

The relationship between reading and use of commercial and professional services is strongest in Paynesville, the small, most homogeneous community of the study. The more limited range of local services which are available are primarily within the traditional town boundaries and for the most part are the only ones advertised in that paper. As indicated in Figure 1, Paynesville is the only place in which there is a strong link between reading and nonfood shopping. About a fourth of the weekly nonreaders "usually" do at least some of their nonfood shopping in Paynesville, while slightly more than two-thirds of the local weekly readers shop in Paynesville alone. While local newspaper readers were also more likely than nonreaders to buy food in Paynesville and go there for recreation, these tendencies were not as pronounced as they were for non-food shopping.

In each of the communities other than Paynesville, the nonreaders are at least as likely to do non-food shopping locally as are the readers. This is true in St. Cloud, where local shopping is high for both readers and nonreaders, and in the suburbs where non-food shopping locally is low, again for both those who read the local paper and for those who do not.

Outside of Paynesville, there was generally little relationship between reading a newspaper and shopping for services. The exceptions are (a) in the Twin Cities, where local newspaper readers were more likely to go locally for recreation, and (b) a slight tendency for suburban readers to do more grocery shopping locally than nonreaders. It should be added that throughout the metro area, at least 95 percent of individuals who went outside their own local communities for services went to other places within that metropolitan area. The exception was

Figure 1. Percent doing non-food shopping in "Own community" & reading the local newspaper.



recreation, with roughly one metro area respondent in 9 or 10 saying they went outside the core cities or one of the suburbs for this leisure time activity. It should be noted that in the Twin Cities and Minnesota generally, there is a notion about lake living and each weekend brings an exodus to the north. Having access to a lake home , while not ubiquitous, is common.

Community differences and services

The metro daily contains advertising for so many different locations that no one location will be particularly dominant among the daily readership. The suburban weekly advertises for a variety of specialty, hardware and convenience outlets in a more restricted geographic area, and in this sense has an advertising mix which may be similar to that of the rural weekly. In the metro area, the large dailies advertise for the entire area in which the suburban weekly exists, including that suburb itself. Individuals in the metro area have access to many advertisements from daily and weekly newspapers for

a wide range of accessible retail outlets, and reading a particular paper is not related to nonfood shopping in a particular metro location. The geographic dispersion of supermarkets in different suburbs, and the more regular advertising of groceries than department store items in suburban weeklies, may well account for the one kind of service use that is related to reading of those suburban newspapers.

Service use and other factors

Were individual factors other than newspaper reading related to use of services? The data made it possible to analyze the extent to which obtaining services locally is related to (a) education, (b) age, and (c) feelings of community identity as measured by the "closeness" scale (table 2). None of these background factors shows either a strong or consistent pattern of relationships with shopping for services. In St. Cloud and in the suburbs, none of these correlations is statistically significant. In Paynesville, there is a tendency for persons who go locally for recreation to feel closer to their community ($r = .31$, $p < .01$), while none of the other coefficients is significant. In Minneapolis, older persons are less likely to go locally for recreation ($r = -.33$, $p < .01$), while those with greater feelings of closeness to their city are somewhat more likely to find recreation there ($r = .18$, $p < .05$).

St. Paul is the only community where at least three of the 12 relationships between the three background factors and shopping locally are .20 or higher. It is also the only community where there is a distinct pattern of older persons being more likely to get both groceries and nonfood retail items locally. Also, higher educated persons in St. Paul are more likely to do nonfood shopping somewhere else in the metro area.

By looking down the four columns of Table 2, one sees that "going locally" for repair and medical services is largely independent of all three background factors. The same is true for food and nonfood shopping, except for the case of St. Paul, mentioned above. Under the recreation column, the coefficients suggest that the relationship with

Table 2. Correlations between obtaining individual services in local community and background factors

	Food, Groceries	Nonfood Shopping	Recreat-ion	Repair, medical
Paynesville				
Education	-.06	.00	-.16	-.08
Age	.06	.01	.12	.09
Closeness	.02	-.17	.31**	-.08
St. Cloud				
Education	-.11	-.11	-.11	.00
Age	.00	.09	-.14	.00
Closeness	.15	-.07	-.12	-.16
Minneapolis				
Education	-.09	-.02	.19*	.01
Age	.01	.10	-.33**	.07
Closeness	-.02	.04	.18*	.08
St. Paul				
Education	-.03	-.23*	-.06	-.05
Age	.20*	.20*	.07	.11
Closeness	.00	-.03	.15	.07
Six suburbs				
Education	-.02	-.07	-.01	.01
Age	.04	.06	-.04	.11
Closeness	-.02	.03	.12	.05

** = $P < .01$ * = $P < .05$

other factors may vary substantially according to community type. Minneapolis is the one community where younger persons are least likely to go go out of their core city for leisure time activity ($r = -.33$, $p < .01$).

Residence, life and identification

A finding of interest in Table 2 is that with the exception of recreation in Paynesville and Minneapolis, feelings of community identity, as measured by the "closeness" scale, are not strongly associated with where one obtains services (9). It appears that where one resides, where one "lives" in the sense of finding things to buy and do, and what community one identifies with may be three very separate things. These findings are not unique, in that the principle of dual citizenship and limited attachment to any particular municipality in a metro area are well established in the literature (10). In addition, other studies have suggested that accessibility to services, satisfaction with those services and attachment to a community may be independent, at least in some communities (11).

While newspaper reading appears from these findings to be more strongly tied to choice of place for services in an outlying rural community than in regional or metro communities, the overall proportion who do their shopping locally is greater in the central core cities than in the suburban or outlying areas. It should be added that overall identification with the local place, according to the "closeness" measure, varies sharply among these communities. The downtown Twin Cities citizen and the St. Cloud citizen tend to reside in, identify with, and "live" in the same community, in the sense of getting services there. The small town rural citizen resides locally, identifies with the home town, but "lives" in the larger area which the regional city dominates. The suburbanite resides in the suburb, but "lives" in and identifies with the larger metro area.

These findings from Paynesville must be seen as tentative, since they involve a single small town. If borne out in other situations,

they would suggest that the contribution of the local press to local retail activity differs from the pattern of metro areas.

The patterns found in this analysis accentuate the question: Has the role of the newspaper shifted from a primarily information dissemination and "fourth estate" function to primarily being concerned with bottom line values and the market orientation? If such is the case, it may mean that the meaning of "community" as well as the functions of the media are undergoing continuing alteration.

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8. An extended report on the survey methodology and other aspects of the findings are included in an earlier report. See C. N. Olien, G. A. Donohue and P. J. Tichenor, "Metropolitan Dominance and Media Use." ANPA News Research Report No. 36, American Newspaper Publishers Association, Sept. 24, 1982.

9. The "closeness" measure of identification was a scale measuring perceptions for five sectors of activity. The introductory question was: "I would like to ask how close you, yourself, feel to various things in your community. For each of these things, please tell me whether you feel very close, fairly close, or not very close." This closeness judgment was made separately for churches, social clubs, friendship groups, neighborhood activities and organizations. Responses where summed to form a Likert-type scale ranging from a score of 5 for lowest closeness to a high of 15. Cronbach alpha scores ranged from .55 in the suburbs to .75 in the Paynesville sample, with a median value of .66 for all communities.

10. Morris Janowitz, THE COMMUNITY PRESS IN AN URBAN SETTING. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952 and 1967.

11. See Howard Ladewig and Glenn C. McCann, "Community satisfaction: Theory and measurement." Rural Sociology 45:110-131, Spring, 1980. Also, see Robert W. Marans and Willard Rodgers, "Toward an understanding of community satisfaction." Chap. 7 in Amos H. Hawley and Vincent Rock, editors, Metropolitan America. New York: Sage, 1975; Willis J. Goudy, "Evaluations of local attributes and community satisfaction in small towns." Rural Sociology 42:371-382, 1977; Richard R. Fernandez and Don A. Dillman, "The influence of community attachment on geographic mobility," Rural Sociology 44:345-360, 1974, and John D. Kasarda and Morris Janowitz, "Community attachment in mass society," American Sociological Review 39:328-339, 1974.